[Further information on the ceremonies and related activities leading to formation of age-sets may be found in category 561.]

1: Hollis G-5 (ca. 1894-1904) 1905
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Districts.	Sub-Districts.
	'Mōwarak (the horns), Lo-'sokonoi (of the cassia tree), Kilepo (watering-place), Ol-osira (the-which-is-decorated), Naiñgacya-ōwarak (which astonishes the beasts of prey), Kipulul (place of many springs), 'N-gujuka (the axe handles), Ol-ñgelata (the plain between two hills), Sighirari, 'L-oita, 'Ng-orighaishi (the small stools), Ol-oitokitok (the bubbling spring), Il-Komōlo, Kitēto, Il-ketu-'m-beine, Salei.
'L-uasin-gishu[1] (the striped cattle).	'L-uasin-gishu oorook (the black striped cattle), 'L-uasin-gishu oonyokyo (the red striped cattle).
'L-Aikipyak[1].	Kimiri (pursuers), Marikōni, Il-meruesh-'n-dana (those who are not thrown down by roots), Sekin, Lo-'l-purkel (of the lowland), Le-naibor (of the white thing), Il-memonyōtu, 'L-alikinani, 'L-ooibor-oiñgok (the white bulls), Loo-dōtwarare, Il-marmar, Lo-'sekelae, 'L-aringon, Eng-añg e-Lema (Lema's kraal), Il-loijo, 'L-aisi.

When the article forms a part of the above names, the vowel is omitted if it follows a word ending in a vowel.

Alo 'N-aiposha	I go to Naivasha.
Alo 'L-oitokitok	I go to Loitokitok.

The Masai reckon time by 'ages' or periods of about seven and a half years. The following account of the Masai ages is given in the words of the Masai themselves.

Eata 'l-Masaae 'l-porori lenye.

The Masai have what they call ages.

Memurati 'n-gera te-'wāji nābo. Eduñg áitaa 'l-porori, metushuli áitaa ol-poror ōbo, amu merisyoro pōkin; emurati 'l-kituak, nepali 'l-ooti metubulu.

Children are not all circumcised together: they are divided up into ages, for they are not all alike in point of years. First of all the big ones are circumcised, and the small ones wait until they grow up (i.e. until they reach the age of puberty).

Ore lekwa kituak ooiteraki sampurat nāji e-murata e-tatēne,

Now, those who are circumcised first belong to what is called the

[1] Owing to cattle plague, disease, and civil wars, the Masai occupying the Uasin-gishu and Aikipyak districts have practically ceased to exist. The remnants have been scattered and mixed with other tribes.

1: Hollis G-5 (ca. 1894-1904) 1905
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561 539 naa ol-poror ŏbo illo. Netoni 'l-ooti. Ore pe ebulu, nemurati si ninje, nejiñg illo-poror.

Ore 'l-ooitŏkīni aamurat te-kurum, naa likae-poror illo, nĕji ninye e-murata e-kedyanye. Netoni ăii 'l-ooti, nemurati si ninje, nejiñg illo-poror.

Ore 'l-pororĭ aare ăji ol-aji ŏbo.

Ore ti-atwa ol-poror ŏbo nĕoriori kat'-uni: etii ''L-chañgen-ŏpir,' netii ''L-tareto,' netii ''L-paringŏtwa lañg.'

right-hand circumcision, and that is one age. The younger ones wait and are circumcised later. They also become members of this age.

When the next circumcision festivals are held, those circumcised belong to what is called the left-hand circumcision, and that is the next age. The younger ones wait as before, and when they are circumcised they likewise join this age.

Now, two ages are considered equivalent to one generation.

Each age has three divisions, first, those known as 'The big ostrich feathers,' secondly, those called 'The helpers,' and thirdly, those known as 'Our fleet runners [1].'

561 805 Il-pororĭ loo-'l-Maasae oodamuni taata. Masai ages which are now remembered.

E-murata e-tatene (Right-hand circumcision).	E-murata e-kedyanye (Left-hand circumcision).	Approximate date.
Il-Kinyŏyo		
	Il-Tapari	1791 / 1799 } one generation.
Il-Kigiriyo		
	Il-Kimalie (the people of the plain)	1806 / 1814 } one generation.
Il-Kupai (the white swords)		
	Il-Kimirisho (those who drive away)	1821 / 1829 } one generation.

561 891 [1] When permission has been granted to hold the circumcision festivals (*vide* p. 296), one feast is held in each sub-district every year for four years in succession, and all those circumcised during these four years belong to the right-hand circumcision. An interval of about three and a half years then intervenes before another festival is held. All youths circumcised during the next four years belong to the left-hand circumcision. As an instance, a man born in 1872 would either belong to 'Our fleet runners' of the Il-Ñgarbet age or to 'The big ostrich feathers' of the Il-Kipŏni age, i. e. he was circumcised in 1885 or 1889. Boys as a rule are circumcised when they are between thirteen and seventeen years old. Orphans and the children of poor parents frequently wait until they are twenty.

[P.282]

'N-DĪUN OO-'L-MAASAE
MASAI CUSTOMS

Women's iron necklaces and ear-rings, and other matters.

301 Seghenge oo-'murto oo 'surutya oo-'ñgorōyok, oo 'n-gulye-tōkitin.

Nēji pe eata 'ñgorōyok i-seghenge oo-'murto oo 'surutya [585] [554] ēji p' eiyōlōuni 'njere 'ñgorōyok kunda.

[881] Amu itadua, 'l-Maasae emurat in-doiye etaa bōtoro, nēji p'ēori en-dito o e-ñgorōyōni.

Amu ten epali 'ñgorōyok meata 'seghenge oo-'murto araki 'surutya, nemeiyōlōuni e-ñgorōyōni o en-dito.

881 561 Itadua, en-dito namurati too-'l-Maasae mēji en-dito ēji e-ñgorōyōni: kake ēji e-siangiki oo metōlsho.

Ten a kiti nalefig, naa e-ñgorōyōni ake etiu nēja.

301 554 Eiyōlōuni e-ñgorōyōni too-'n-dōkitin uni, 'surutya, oo 'seghenge oo-'murto, oo 'l-okesena. Nemeata 'n-doiye kunna pōkin.

'Musetani epika 'n-doiye oo 'n-gutiti-seghenge nāirina, naaji 'seengani, o ol-gilishōni, oo 'n-gulye-kutiti-tōkitin naapik i-murto, 'l-pisya loo-'n-giyaa, oo 'seghenge oo-'ng-aik, oo 'n-oo-'n-gejek.

The reason why women wear necklaces of iron and ear-rings (called 'surutya) is in order that it shall be known that they are married.

The Masai circumcise girls when they grow up, and these ornaments are worn to make a distinction between girls and women.

For if the women were left without the iron necklaces or the ear-rings, it could not be ascertained whether they were women or girls.

A Masai girl who has been circumcised is not called girl but woman. That is to say, she is called young woman until she gives birth to a child.

Even if she is very young, she is considered to be grown up as soon as she has been circumcised.

A woman is recognizable by three things, the ear-rings, the iron-necklace, and the big garment, none of which girls possess.

Girls wear beads, small pieces of iron wire (called 'seengani), and other trifles round their necks, and a small cloth. They also have chains in their ears, and armlets and anklets of iron.

1: Hollis G-5 (ca. 1894-1904) 1905
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553 574 raari el-lughunya, epiki kutukaji. Nemeduñgori ol-kidoñgoi to-'l-chōni, epali etii metabana nemuta illo-abōni.

857 ● 881 Ore ol-kiteñg le-'n-dōmōno mēji ēyeñgi inna-kata ake p' eini en-gerai; kake eidimi aataanyu metaa bōtor oo metaa emurati. Memurati ol-tuñgani eitu eñgasi aayeñg ol-kiteñg le-'n-dōmōno.

881 E-murata.

Eisho 'l-Maasae:

Ore ol-móruo leitu ae-oloñg emurat en-gerai, nemeidim atumurata eitu epolos e-aita.

Ore en-dōki naji Em-bolosata e-sita, eisho ol-móruo p' eiyōu nemurat en-gerai enye naiteru, emuk en-aisho, neipot il-lewa le-'l-latya enye, neishori, eton emuka 'n-aishi.

Nepwei áitaki illo-oiyōu nemuratisho eng-añg ti-aulo, nelo aton openy te-inne, neirag inne, ne'yakīni en-daa, neton ing-oloñgi oñgwan.

Ore te-nenna-oloñgi elōtu ake añg aiñguraa 'n-gīabu ti-aulo.

881 292 [237] Neishopito 'n-dōkitin oo-'l-muran—ol-alem, o em-bere, o ol-kuma, o el-loñgo, o engeranda, o e-aidai, ool-mairutye, the hut, and the skull, instead of being thrown away, is placed by the door. The tail is not separated from the hide as is usually the case: it is left on until the hide is worn out.

Now the offspring bullock is not of necessity slaughtered when the child is born; it is permissible to wait until he is big and until he is about to be circumcised. No person is circumcised, however, until this bullock has been slaughtered.

The circumcision.

The following is a Masai custom:

A Masai child cannot be circumcised until the father has observed a custom called The passing of the fence.

The man who wishes to have his eldest child circumcised brews some honey-wine, and calls his neighbours together while it is being prepared.

A hut is then built for him outside the kraal, and he stays there for four days alone. He also sleeps there, and his food is taken to him.

During these four days he only approaches the kraal to look after his cattle when they are grazing outside.

He must don the clothes, ornaments, and weapons of a warrior—the sword, the spear, the club, and the shield, the cap made from the

1: Hollis G-5 (ca. 1894-1904) 1905
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292
881
[237]

se 'mungun, o e-rap, o en-gila, o ol-kipiss.

stomach of a goat, the head-dress of ostrich feathers[1], and the cape of vultures' feathers, the anklets of colobus-monkey skin, the arm-clamp, the garment of calf-skin, and the piece of goat's skin fastened to the waist.

Ore p' eidipayu 'ng-oloñgi oñgwan, nepwei aariku añg kulikae-móruak kituak.

When the four days have elapsed, some of the elders go and bring him back to the kraal.

881

Neitaahēyoki te-kutuk-aji e-'ng-aji natii 'n-opa-aishi naatumukaki.

He has to stand by the door of the hut where the honey-wine, which has previously been prepared, is kept.

Nājōki ol-móruo ōbo lido-ōpolos e-sita: 'Inno, kitoo.'

One elder then says to him who is passing the fence: 'Go, become an old-man.'

Nājo lido-ōpolos e-sita: 'Ih! malo, e-ñgikitoi!'

The latter replies: 'Ho! I shall not . . . !'

Nājōkīni kat'-are: 'Inno kitoo doshi.' Nājo ol-ōpolos e-sita: 'Malo doshi.'

The order is repeated, but he still refuses.

Ore pe ājōkīni kat'-oñgwan, ore pe ebau en-e-imyet, nājo ol-ōpolos e-sita: 'Ih! ashōmo naa.'

On being told for the fifth time, he says: 'Ho! I have gone then.'

Ore pe ejiñg aji, nelakuni nekwa-tōkitin, nāoki taa 'n-aishi, neiteri ñipotye eng-arna e-'n-gerai enye, aajo: Menye-ñgania.

He then enters the hut and puts aside the warrior's paraphernalia; the honey-wine is drunk; and he is called by his son's name, thus: The father of so-and-so.

[551]

Neirukisho: 'Oe.' Nājōkīni: 'Tabarishore.'

When he replies to this name, he is told to go and make a profit.

Nājo ninye: ''N-gishu oo 'n-dare.'

He answers: 'Herds and flocks.'

Ore pe ājī nāja kat'-oñgwan, neidipayu.

This is repeated four times, and the ceremony is over.

[1] Sometimes instead of the ostrich feather head-dress one made of lion's or leopard's skin is worn, and occasionally the head-dress called ol-marangash is substituted. This head-dress is worn by the warriors when they slaughter cattle in the woods.

1: Hollis G-5 (ca. 1894-1904) 1905
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881 Neaku ol-móruo oidim atumurata 'n-gera enyena, aa 'n-doiye aa 'l-ayok.

After this any of his children, whether girls or boys, may be circumcised.

E-murata oo-'l-ayok.

881 574 Ten eiyōu 'l-ayok loo-'l-Maasae nemurati, etaiyōlōito 'njere etabaua en-gata enye namuratyeki, nepwo áiturure 'l-loo-'l-oahon oonyika, nerōo 'n-gīshu eng-añg o-'l-oiboni, ne'ya sii 'n-aishi.

Boys' circumcision.

When Masai boys wish to be circumcised—having previously ascertained that the time for circumcision has arrived—all those who live in neighbouring districts collect together, and, taking cattle and honey with them, go to the medicine-man's kraal.

Ore en-dōki naata 'l-ayok too-'ng-aik áitaa 'n-areta naa 'n-gusidin ake, me'ya 'remeta neme'ya 'l-alema: il-kuman ake eremōki 'musetani naatii 'm-bolosi.

The only weapons which they may carry in their hands are sticks; they have neither spears nor swords, and their clubs are stuck into their belts.

Ore 'l-ooiñgua 'n-gwapi naalakwa, anaa Kitēto, anaa Moipo, anaa kulye-kwapi naalakwa, neibuñgaa lello 'ng-ai, kake me'ya 'm-baa, neme'ya 'mootyani.

Those who come from countries afar off, such as Kiteto or Moipo, or other distant places, may take their bows, but they must leave their arrows and quivers behind.

Ore taa p' eishori e-murata, neipak, nesirare en-duroto.

[302]

When they have received permission to hold the circumcision festival, they enjoy themselves, and paint their bodies with chalk.

Nelilita too-'ng-añgite 'l-apaltin aare araki ōkuni, nepwo e-wōji nemuratyeki aa 'ng-añgite enye, netoni too-'ng-añgite enye metabana nemurati.

They then pay visits to different kraals during the next two or three months, after which they return home, where they remain until they are circumcised [1].

Ten emurati ol-ayōni

When a Masai boy is circumcised,

[1] It is at this time that the boys of each sub-district choose one of their number to be their ol-aigwenani, that is to say, their counsellor or spokesman, who is also their judge and their representative at the chief medicine-man's court.

1: Hollis G-5 (ca. 1894-1904) 1905
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loo-'l-Maasae, nebarni inna-oloñg netupukuni, nāyeñgi ol-kerr araki ol-kiteñg ōji Ol-oitupukunieki.

Ore te-'ng-oloñg e-are nelo ol-ayōni aduñgu en-jani naji El-latim; nepwo 'n-doiye aanapu, nāuni te-kutuk-aji.

Ore tadēkenya neipuñg ol-ayōni alo aton ti-aulo metaama en-gijape. Neisuja te-'ng-are áitushulaki em-bere e-papa.

Ore pe ekenyu naleñg, nebol ñgotonye o-'l-ayōni kishōmi, ne'ya ol-chōni apik en-daloishi e-tatēne.

Nelōtu ol-ayōni aton to-'l-chōni, nelōtu ol-Torōbōni ōmurat oo 'l-tuñganak ooibuñg.

Ore ol-tuñgani oibuñg ol-ayōni ōmurati eton áitório 'n-gejek, neton ol-ayōni too-'rishat oo-'n-gejek, nemurati.

Ore ten eipiri ol-ayōni emuratitai, nāari ñgotonye too-'ñgudisin; naa ten eiyōlōu ñgotonye oo menye aajo eipírio en-gerai, nepwo áisudori.

Ore p' eidipi aatumurat, the ceremony is started by his being shaved, after which a sheep or bullock is slaughtered, which is called The (animal) that has caused him to be taken out (from the boys' ranks). 88 |

On the second day the boy sallies forth to cut a tree called El-latim[1], which is carried by girls to the kraal, where it is planted at the door of the hut.

The next morning the boy goes and sits down outside the kraal to get cold. He also washes himself with water in which a fern called Father's spear[2] has been soaked. 881 304 [824]

When the sun is some way above the horizon, his mother opens the gate of the kraal, and fetches an ox-hide which she puts on the ground by the right-hand door-post.

The boy then takes his place on the hide, and the operator, a Dorobo, comes together with the men whose duty it is to hold the boy.

The man who holds him straightens out his legs, and the boy sits between them and is circumcised[3].

If the boy winces during the operation, his mother is beaten with sticks; and if the boy's parents know that he will behave like a coward, they go away and hide themselves.

As soon as the operation is over, the

[1] This tree is generally called Ol-ollalei (*Zizyphus mucronata*, Willd.), but it is called El-latim during the circumcision festivities.

[2] *Asparagus* sp.

[3] The circumcision of the Masai has been described in Thomson's *Through Masailand*, in Johnston's *The Uganda Protectorate*, and in *The Journal of the Anthropological Society for Great Britain and Ireland*, June, 1904 (Bagge). [113]

1: Hollis G-5 (ca. 1894-1904) 1905
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881 [304] nenapi ol-chōni etii o-sarge, nepiki e-ruat enye.

Ore ten eidipi aatumurat il-ayok, nēji 'Sipōlio.

Netoni 'ng-oloñgi oñgwan ti-añg, neitobirakīni 'ng-ai.

Ore 'm-baa enye nepetyeki 'ng-orongōni pe, ten eñgórie 'n-doiye, nemeim i-seseni.

[223] Neishori meshōmo aalilita, neñgor in-daritik aapik il-lughuny; nepik sii 'l-ōpir.

Enyori naleñg I-sipōlio eitobir anaa 'ñgorōyok aapik i-surutya oo 'l-kilani. Nesir sii 'ng-omomito te-'n-duroto.

Ore p' eishiu pōkin, nebarni, neaku 'L-barnot. Ore p' eaku 'L-barnot, neitau 'l-kilani, neishop in-dōkitin oo-'l-muran.

561 Ore pe eshitu 'l-teighan, nēji 'L-muran.

Ore enyor il-muran naleñg ten ēji 'L-oiñgok araki 'N-gamīnini, amu eishori meishopo 'n-dwalan araki 'l-toroñgen.

554 Ore ēji 'l-muran 'l-oiñgok ten eidim aataar il-meek kumok.

hide on which is the blood is carried by the boy and placed on his bed.

When the boys have all been circumcised they are called 'Sipolio (recluse).

They remain at home for four days, and bows are prepared for them.

They then sally forth and shoot at the young girls, their arrows being blocked with a piece of honey-comb so that they cannot penetrate into the girls' bodies.

They also shoot small birds[1], which they wear round their heads together with ostrich feathers.

The Sipolio like to appear as women and wear the surutya earrings and garments reaching to the ground. They also paint their faces with chalk.

When they have all recovered, they are shaved again and become Il-barnot (the shaved ones). They then discard the long garments and wear warriors' skins and ornaments.

After this their hair is allowed to grow, and as soon as it has grown long enough to plait, they are called Il-muran (warriors)[2].

The warriors are fond of the titles 'L-oingok (the bulls) and 'N-gaminini (the generous people), for they may then wear bells or a bracelet called il-torongen.

Now to become one of the Oingok, a warrior must kill many savages,

[136] [1] The bird which the Sipolio wear round their heads is the mouse bird (*Colius affinis*, Shelley). Boys who behaved in a cowardly manner during the operation are not allowed to shoot these birds.

[2] This word is commonly but incorrectly written Elmoran.

1: Hollis G-5 (ca. 1894-1904) 1905
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Ore ŏji 'N-gaminĭni ten ŏyeñg il-moñgi, neisho 'l-kulikae 'n-giri.

whilst the Gaminini are chosen if they frequently slaughter bullocks and give the meat to their comrades. 554

E-murata oo-'n-doiye.

Ten eiyŏuni neiyami 'n-doiye oo-'l-Maasae, nemurati.

Ore eng-oloñg namurati, nŏyeñgi ol-kerr araki ol-kiteñg, ŏji Ol-oitŭpukunieki, anaa too-'l-ayok.

Nemurati ninje ti-atwa aji. Naa, ten eishir, nemeata en-netiu.

Mepika ninje 'l-ŏpir anaa 'l-ayok, ol-merisian ake epika.

Ore ten eishiu, neiyami.

The girls' circumcision.

When Masai girls wish to marry, they are circumcised. 881 [582]

On the day that the operation is performed, a sheep or bullock is slaughtered, and as with the boys it is called The (animal) which has caused her to be taken out (from amongst the girls).

Women are operated upon indoors, and it is not considered a disgrace if they cry out. [304]

Instead of the ostrich feathers which the boys wear, a wreath made from the leaves of the *Hyphaene* (or doum) palm, or of grass, is donned. [237] [292]

When they recover, they are married. [582]

E-unoto.

Ten eiyŏu 'l-muran nĕuni, nepwo aañgas ăiñgoru Ol-aunŏni, na ol-tuñgani ŏata menye oo figotonye eiñgoru, neata 'n-gĭshu, neitu ae-oloñg ĕar ol-tuñgani, nemedanya 'ng-onyek e-menye oo figotonye, nemeata 'ng-onyek pusi [2].

Ore pe etum, nemiliki;

The feast called E-unoto *or* the selection of a chief [1].

If the warriors wish to select a chief, who is called Ol-aunoni, they choose a man whose parents are still living, who owns cattle and has never killed anybody, whose parents are not blind, and who himself has not a discoloured eye. 622 574

When they succeed in getting such

[1] A chief called Ol-aunŏni is appointed for each sub-district. His duties are to keep the warriors of his sub-district together, and he is responsible to the chief medicine-man for their appearance in case of war. If a warrior disobeys the orders of his chief, he is flogged or maltreated by his companions.

[2] Pus (pl. pusi) means the colour of a corpse *or* blue.

2: Bernardi E, M-4 (no date) 1955 FL12 Masai FL12

English as 'generation' and 'age', respectively. Such a terminology is too vague and of little assistance in shedding light on the matter. 561

Sometimes the Masai apply those terms alternatively to the class or to the units,[38] but usually *ol aje* stands for the broader and final association i. e., the age-class, and *ol poror* for the temporary association i. e., the age-unit.

Age-class membership is obtained through initiation, and is held for life. The initiation course is opened by some preliminary ceremonies. These must be performed before any individual member may be initiated singly or in a group. Analysis shows that the importance of these ceremonies in connection with the institution of an age class varies greatly. There are four such ceremonies: 1) *Epolos e-sita*; 2) *Embolosata*; 3) *Endungore*; 4) *Engibata*.[39] 561 881

Epolos E - Sita, " The passing of the fence ".[40] " A Masai child ", states Hollis, " cannot be circumcised until the father has observed a custom called " The passing of the fence ". The ceremony consists in a period of four days segregation. The candidate's father lives in a special hut set apart from the village, where he also takes his food. During this time he wears the clothes, decorations and weapons of a warrior. On the last day he is taken back to the village by some elders. Before he enters the house where the ceremonial wine is kept, he is addressed five times by one of the elders thus: " Go, become an old man ". He refuses saying: " Ho, I shall not ". At the fifth time, he replies – " Ho, I have gone then ". He then, enters the hut and puts aside the warrior's paraphernalia; the honey wine is drunk; and he is called by his son's name, thus: The father 881 593

[38] Whitehouse, *Masai Social Customs*, in *J. E. A. U. N. H. S.*, 3, 1913, p. 146; Fox, *l. c.*, p. 449.

[39] It is a widely held opinion that the institution of the Masai age-class is based entirely on the circumcision cermony. Actually it is not uncommon to find the term " circumcision " used as an alternative to age-system and its groups. This opinion is partly justified by the expressions " right-hand circumcision ", *emurata tatene*, and " .eft-hand circumcision ", *emurata kedyenye*, applied by the Masai to the first and second age-units, *il poror*, that forms a single ageclass, *ol aje*.

It is a fact that circumcision is one of the outstanding ceremonies of the initiation course. However, it should be realised that circumcision is not identical with initiation, and above all that the institution of the age-unit as well as the age-class does not arise immediately out of circumcision. Therefore the tendency to make everything connected with Masai age-system gravitate towards circumcision is misleading.

[40] Hollis, *l. c.*, pp. 294 ss.

2: Bernardi E, M-4 (no date) 1955 FL12 Masai FL12

881 593 of so-and-so. When he replies to his name, he is told to go and make a profit. He answers: "Herds and flocks". This is repeated four times, and the ceremony is over".

554 561 881 593 The ceremony is performed only once in a man's life, namely when he "wishes to have his eldest child circumcised". This particular circumstance shows that by "the passing of the fence" a man obtains a special elderly status which gives him a right to have all his children initiated.

Thus, there is a relationship between the father's social status and the initiation into the age-class of his son's. None of these may be initiated unless the father has reached the proper status. The personal status of the father is reflected on his children. Therefore the "passing of the fence" is not in itself part of the age-system initiation, but a condition which must have been observed before a man is allowed to have his sons initiated.

[565] Other authorities (Fox) have stressed the fact that class membership of a Masai is somehow dictated by the class to which his father belongs. "The passing of the fence" gives a special emphasis to this fact and shows how a Masai's initiation into a class is conditioned by the social status of his father. It shows how the structure of Masai society stands on the balance of status of its members. [1]

881 634 [184] "*The tearing of the ox*" (*Embolosat ol Kiteng*). [2] Though this ceremony is performed by a single section or a group of sections, its performance has a far reaching value which is accepted throughout Masailand. The ceremony is performed by such sections as the Kakonyuke, the Dalalakotok and the Purko (all Kapiti). According to Fox the Kisongo also perform it. But this is denied by Fosbrooke, [114] who qualifies Fox's statement by saying that the Kisongo acknowledge and respect the value of the ceremony performed by the Kakonyuke.

881 561 634 As a matter of fact special importance is attached to the ceremony performed by the Kakonyuke, who in any case must be the first to do it and who have the lead in the matter. All the sections which

[1] The social balance between the father and his son is only an expression of a wider and basic principle, which, in our opinion, is an essential principle of Masai social organisation: the principle of the distribution of power. See Bernardi, *l. c.*, pp. 326 ss.

[2] Fox, *Notes on Marriage Customs among the Masai*, in *J. E. A. U. N. H. S.*, 42-43, 1931, pp. 189 s.; Leaky, *l. c.*, p. 448; *NAD*, 1926, p. 9, n. 11; 1927, p. 15, n. 61; Fosbrooke, *l. c.*, p. 27.

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do not hold their own ceremony come to, or acknowledge, the Kakonyuke ceremony. This is a point to be carefully noted. [881 561 634]

Embolosat is preliminary not only to the circumcision ceremony, but also to any other initiation ceremony.

Three different stages make up the whole of the ceremony, namely the election of the master of ceremonies, the contest, and the sacrifice of a bull followed by the naming of the age-unit.

a) The ceremony is organised by the elders. Their first task is to select a youth qualified to be master of the ceremonies (*ol opolos ol Kiteng*). They also must obtain his father's consent on payment of some heifers.

The transaction is kept secret because the office is not popular with the youths. The elders' nominee is then seized in order that he may not escape, and told what is in store for him.

Not every boy is eligible for the office, but only a member of the *Lugumai* clan. The *ol opolos* must wear the garments and the ear-ornaments (*surutya*) of the elders, whose status he is to be invested with, which seems the reason for the reluctance to accept the office. *The status of the ol opolos* is ceremonial and, according to Fox, he has no function outside the *Embolosat*. [614] [554]

The *ol opolos* has to supply the ceremonial bull, " without blemish, colour black with white breast ", [43] and the ceremony is completed at his village which is enlarged for the occasion. [44]

b) The day of the contest is fixed by the elders. In the morning the bull is taken back to the village, while the elders officially introduce the *ol opolos* to the other candidates. These are told to look up to him because he is their *ol opolos*. Then, the elders order the bull into the village and immediately the boys rush in to get hold of it.

Not all the boys enter the competition, only a few from each attending section. [45]

Members of the Kakonyuke section make a point of being victorious. The contest is stopped by the elders as soon as victory is [634]

[43] In the Annual Report, *NAD*, 1926, p. 9, n. 11, we are told that the " black ox is fed one day on milk and native beer, not being allowed to eat grass ".

[44] According to Leakey a special new village is built.

[45] Leaky writes that " only three candidates for initiation whose fathers took part in a horn-seizing ceremony are allowed to take part; the rest of the candidates cannot do so, but stay at their houses while the ceremony takes place ".

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88 56 in sight. Victory consists in getting a hold of the bullock by its right horn and maintaining the grip.

c) After the contest the bull is smothered, and skinned; rings are made out of the skin and distributed by the *ol opolos*.[46] "The meat is eaten and the elders go to a place apart to pray to God for the boys. The age is then given a name which is kept until the *E-Unoto* ceremony, which takes place some years later". (Fox).

The bones of the ox are burnt and the fire is guarded to avoid any evil spell being cast on it.

Eventually the boys return to their homes and wait for their turn to be circumcised.

The fact that "only the right hand circumcision", i. e. the first of the two age-units of an age class, performs the ceremony is essential to an analysis of the significance of *Embolosat*.[47] It means that *Embolosat* is the first ceremony of the initiation which institutes the class, and not simply of the initiation which institutes the age-unit. Indeed the left hand circumcision, i. e. the junior age-unit of the class, does not perform *Embolosat*, and therefore the senior age-unit acting at *Embolosat* does it on behalf of the whole class. *Embolosat* should then be regarded as the starting point of a new class, opening the period during which the class is instituted. This specific value of *Embolosat* is confirmed by the acceptance on the part of all the Masai of the Kakonyuke ceremony. We do not know the reason why this ceremony should have such a paramount importance, but its social significance seems to be a thoroughly established fact. LEAKEY states that "only one ox-seizing ceremony (is held) in the whole Masai country, before a new age-group proceeds to initiation and circumcison". This statement is qualified by FOX in the sense that *Embolosat* is also performed by other sections, as we mentioned above, but the Kakonyuke must first perform it. Of the Kisongo FOSBROOKE writes: "the elders are extremely vague as to its (of *Embolosat*) meaning, but that the new age is formally inaugurated by *Embolosat* in Kenya is fully confirmed by the elders round Mondul".

[46] According to LEAKEY, the *ol opolos* is given a thong made from the skin and he is supposed never to throw it away, an obligation which does not apply to the youths who are given the rings.

[47] In the chart of Masai "age-grades" arranged by FOSBROOKE, l. c., p. 24, *embolosat* is shown as taking place before the two circumcision periods of the age-units. This does not agree with the evidence offered by FOX.

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The value of the Kakonyuke *Embolosat* is further ascertained from the analogous value of *Ngeherr* proper of the Kisongo. This is a ceremony perfecting the institution of a class. It is performed by the Kisongo and accepted by all the Masai of Tanganyika and Kenya. *See below.*

The fact that sections other than the Kakonyuke hold their own ceremony may probably be ascribed to the tendency of the section to act as independent group. Their performance, at any rate, has only a limited local value.

Endungore – Engibata. [46] It appears that these two ceremonies, *Endungore* and *Engibata* are closely connected, if not actually one single ceremony. [47] The aim of *Endungore-Engibata* is to define the period for the institution of the age-units and start the initiation course related to such institution. The ceremony is performed by "the right hand and the left hand" age units, i. e. before the institution of each of the two units (WHITEHOUSE, MERKER, FOSBROOKE).

Some of our authorities stress the fact that the first step towards initiation must be taken by the boys. This is true, but the decision to hold the ceremony rests entirely with the elders, and the aim of the candidates' action on the elders is merely to convince that the time is ripe for the decision.

The elders contacted by the boys are members of the class next but one above the class which is to be formed by the candidates. [48]

It is not the leading elders that the candidates contact first, but others, whose duty, apparently, is to instruct them on the right way and method of approaching the leaders of the elders' class.

Those who are to see the elders are selected with care. They "must be pure bred Masai and must have some knowledge of ceremonial routine" (DAWSON).

It is relevant to note these details. They show how the prospec-

[46] MERKER, l. c., p. 61; BAGGE, *The circumcision ceremony among the Ndorobo Masai*, in *J. R. A. I.*, 34, 1904, p. 188; HOLLIS, l. c., p. 190; LEAKEY, 187 ss.; FOX, *Further Notes on the Masai of Kenia Colony*, in *J. R. A. I.*, 16, 1930, pp. 443 ss.; WHITEHOUSE, l. c., pp. 146 ss.; DAWSON, *Notes on (a) Engepaia ceremony, (b) milk drinking ceremony, (c) Oi Koromby*, pp. 1 ss.; *NAD*, 1932, p. 22, n. 63; *NAD*, 1937, p. 32, n. 84; FOSBROOKE, l. c., pp. 16 s, 27 s.

[47] According to WHITEHOUSE *engibata* is the name of a dance which starts the *endungore*.

[48] In these and the following paragraphs whenever we refer to the elders" we intend the members of this class, unless otherwise stated.

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tive unit, and class, leaders are carefully selected and practically trained. It is from the outstanding senior members of the class, i. e. from those who have come to the fore since the very beginning, that leaders, whatever their function in Masai society, emerge.

The messengers (*ol amal* – message) wear warriors' garments and decorations but no arms. "Their quest is a peaceful one" (WHITEHOUSE). *

Only two of the deputation will be introduced to the class-leader (*olpurenos*) by some of the elders. The message is delivered on behalf of all class candidates to the leader with some presents of honey. The matter is discussed by the leader and his council, and the messengers are advised of the date for the feast.

It is at this point that, according to WHITEHOUSE, *Endungore* is performed.

The ceremony is started by a dance (*Engibata*) in full array ** followed by a prayer to God (*Ngai Narok* – the black God) for the candidates. The elders then take the candidates apart and instruct them on their duties towards the elders and their seniors generally. As soon as this is over, a fire-stick, a male circumcision knife, and a small dead bird (other than a dove) are produced. The elders break the stick, pierce the eyes of the bird and break its legs, and lay a curse on the knife. "In this way, the elders formally lay claim to the sponsorship of a new agegroup. From that time the boys refer to their sponsors as *Il Piron* whilst the elders refer to the boys as *Il-Piron*" (WHITEHOUSE). Indeed, it should be noted, as FOSBROOKE points out, that though the term *il piron* is frequently used with reference to the elders, it is a reciprocal term expressing a mutual relationship.

The symbolism of the *Endungore* ceremony is plain: the ceremony closes an initiation period.

When the *Endungore* is over, some of the elders (presumably the *olpurenani*) and three or four of the candidates go with presents to inform the prophet that the firesticks have been broken. They say – *Ol piron lang ello, kiro nale.* "This is our fire stick, we are one", which probably means that a new firestick is used to produce

* It is not clear whether the number of boy messengers is fixed. LAGERSTEDT states that the *amal*-boys number from six to twelve, DAWSON 30, FOSBROOKE 9. Probably no significance is attached to the actual figure.

** There rows are formed, each distinguished by proper decoration, the first wears ostrich-feathers, the second wears lion-mane head-dresses, and all the members of the third have their bodies decorated with white stripes.

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fire as a symbol of the new relationship between the elders and the candidates.

The next stage of *Endongoro-Enpisate* is the election of the unit leader (*sipuvanai*). This office is not popular with the boys,[30] and the election is kept as secret as possible from the person concerned. It is not very clear whether the election rest primarily with the boys or with the elders, both have a say in the matter since it is of common concern.[31] The selected person is chosen from the so called *ingopior*, i. e. "those who have shown ability and strength of character during the many debates already held" (WHITEHOUSE). This indicates that he must be a man of talent and personality. Some consideration is also given to the clan and family from which he comes.[32] The appointment is forced upon the boy, but only after the approval of his family has been obtained. The insignia of the *sipuvanai* is a black cloth, which is presented to him by the leader of the elders. Prayers are also offered for the new chief.

The naming of the age-unit takes place now with great solemnity. [illegible] These are called *mojongona*. They take part in the ceremony dressed up in full regalia and painted with red clay and chalk.[33]

On the following day a great sacrifice of two bullocks[34] is also

[30] For the same reason given for the *ol ngulai*.

[31] WHITEHOUSE states that "the names of possible candidates are submitted to the *ilipona* elders for consideration; the elders do not actually select a boy but prevent any unwise choice being made. The responsibility of making a choice rests with the boys themselves". On the other hand FOX, l. c., p. 426, states that in the first instance the nomination is made by the elders, and if the candidates are dissatisfied with him they may ask for a change. HADDON, l. c., p. 61, states the boys elect one of their number.

[32] Particularly, he must not be a member of the *Ingoingo* clan, the clan of the ladies.

[33] According to DYNGOR, the *mojongona* must be *ok-li* (the ceremony is for the "right-hand" unit), *ok-li* the ceremony is for the "left-hand" unit. These boys must be pure Nimi, and must never have killed a Nimi.

[34] "The *mojongona*", writes DYNGOR, "assemble in the middle of the village and the *Ajipanum*, having passed heavy bow into a crescent made out of a *bada* bark, blows two blasts on it and shouts the name. There is no answer as this name must never be mentioned by anyone. He again blows the horn and shouts out another name and is answered by a shout of 'Ee' from the *mojongona*. He again shouts out the name and is again answered by a shout of 'Ee' ". The name is later announced to the other candidates by the leader and the *mojongona*.

[35] The sacrifice of the bullocks (one must be entirely white, the other entirely black) is ended by great ceremonial. The two beasts are sacrificed and

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[51] ceremony performed. The festival lasts three days, during which some of the candidates are allowed to leave the place. It is only at the third day that they remove all decorations and are allowed "to cross the stream".

The fourth day after the sacrifice, all candidates are informed by their leader that they are free to return home, and on doing so he warns them that they must be honest and loyal. With this *Endeugure-Baptisate* is over.

The relationship between the elders and the candidates, the *il piron* relationship, offers a special subject of analysis.

As stated above, the elders in question are members of the class next but one above the class to be formed by the initiation of the candidates. The gradation marking the two classes perhaps offer the clue to discovering why the sponsors of the candidates must be members of a definite class. We know from the rhythm of Masai class-system that the class next but one above the class of the c[illegible]

[52] piron-elders, therefore, possess the same social status as the fathers of the candidates. Hence, being on the same social level, the *piron*-elders possess the social capacity to be sponsors for the candidates. Such sponsorship brings about a mutual relationship between the two classes, a relationship respected by members of the classes concerned throughout their life.

The *piron*-elders have a real authority over the candidates so that no ceremony connected with initiation may be started by the candidate without the approval of the elders. The piron-relationship is officially established at the *Endeugure* ceremony. [a]

[53] their blood is drunk in turn by the sponsors and all candidates. Then two of the elders smear the face of the candidates with the bullocks' heart. The elders must be of the 'right-hand' unit, but they are assisted by two of the 'left-hand', who take their place when they are tired. The meat is distributed among the elders (if wanting, i. e. the last initiates, are attending, they are not supposed to be seen eating meat in public), and the usual sacrificial hide rings are prepared for all those present. All the time the bones of the animals are watched to prevent stealing for the purpose of magic, and finally they are burnt and all the remains buried underground.

[a] That the piron-elders take a strong view of their power is shown by a case reported by Fosbrooke, pp. 16 s. In February, 1936, after *Endeugure* had been performed, " a *Dorobi* elder (i. e. senior elder, member of the class next but two above the candidates at the time) decided to circumcise his two sons, and himself beat in preparation for the event. The local *Dorobi* (the piron-elders), hearing of this, determined to stop him, marched into his house (of-

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Endungore-Engibata is performed both by the 'right-hand' and the 'left-hand' age units. This shows that the ceremony has a direct effect on the institution of the age units as such and not as coefficients of the age-class. The formation of the age unit takes place during an official period in which all its prospective members must be properly initiated. This official period is primarily defined by the performance of *Endungore-Engibata*.

Endungore-Engibata obtains its value by emphasizing the negative aspect of the new initiation period, namely by making it illegal, a new *piron*-relationship having been established, to initiate any one except on the new *piron*-elders' authority, and by closing the association of further members to the previous age-unit. [88]

Engibata, therefore is to be considered as the opening ceremony for the institution of the age unit. After *Engibata* candidates are legally initiated and automatically, i. e. precisely for having been initiated during a definite approved period, become members of that age unit.

From a territorial point of view *Endungore-Engibata* is a sectional ceremony. It is performed by minor territorial sections, but no single performance is acknowledged throughout Masailand, as in the case of *Embolosat*. This makes clear the different value of *Embolosat* and of *Endungore-Engibata*. *Embolosat* opens the period for the institution of the age-class, and therefore its value is accepted

lage) and drank the beer themselves. It is confirmed by numerous reliable elders, that, even if the *laibon* had given his sanction for the circumcision, the *Dareto* elders would have been justified in acting as they did". Note the prophet's limited authority.

[88] This is clearly shown by the case reported by FOSBROOKE and quoted in previous footnote. The *Dwasi* man had failed to inform the *Dareto* elders (the *piron*-elders) of his intention, and very probably his sons' initiation was intended to be performed by the outgone *piron*-elders. If the *Dwasi* man had his own way, his sons would have become members of the last age-unit, but illegaly: hence the so strong objection of the *Dareto* elders. The above explanation is confirmed by what MERKER, pp. 70 s., states, namely that a fourth minimal division, *el oiregua*, could be formed by those who were circumcised immediately before the official closing of the period for individual initiation. See below. In *NAD*, 1937, p. 22, n. 84, we read as follows: " the Officer in charge reported that a number of *lapoh* (uncircumcised boys) who would have been too old to await the next '*Ngobata*' were circumcised and incorporated in the *Kidoto* age ". Probably this is a similar case as that referred to by MERKER. The case shows that there is a definite closing time for every set. After this time every new initiate will be associated with a new set.

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by all the Masai. It is performed by the first group of class members (right-hand unit), but, as it were, on behalf of the whole class. *Endungore-Engibata* opens the period for the institution of the age unit. It is performed by the first batch of unit-members, who can be said to act on behalf of all their unit-mates.

Endungore-Engibata cuts the period which was opened by *Embolosat* into two sub-periods during which the age-units are instituted.

To these two ceremonies, *Embolosat* and *Endungore-Engibata*, correspond two closing ceremonies having analogous effects and limitations. Thus, every age-unit is officially closed by the performance of the *Unete* ceremony, and the class is officially closed by the performance of the *Ngoherr* proper.

The problem of the interval between these ceremonies will be discussed below.

IV – INDIVIDUAL INITIATION [1]

Individual initiation, or the first initiation of individual members, is effected through the circumcision ceremonial.

This initiation is not, territorially, a sectional ceremony, but it is performed at any village where candidates are found. The ceremony is enacted by small (2 or 3: FOSBROOKE), [2] or perhaps larger (MERKER), [3] groups of candidates, or even singly (FOSBROOKE, and HOLLIS), [4] and the latter seems to be the general rule according to (FOX), [5] The guiding principle seems to be that a candidate must be initiated at his father's village. [6]

The expression " individual initiation " describes how each and every candidate is expected to pass through it, and how the cere-

[1] BEECH, l. c., pp. 108 ss.; MERKER, l. c., pp. 61 ss.; HOLLIS, *Further Notes on the Masai of Kenya Colony*, in *J. R. A. I.*, 60, 1930, pp. 143 s.; *Notes on Marriage Customs among the Masai*, in *J. E. A. U. N. H. S.*, 43-45, 1931, pp. 190 ss.; LEAKEY, l. c., pp. 190 s.; FOSBROOKE, l. c., p. 38.

[2] FOSBROOKE, l. c., p. 38.

[3] MERKER, l. c., p. 62.

[4] FOSBROOKE, l. c., p. 38; HOLLIS, l. c., p. 297.

[5] HOLLIS, *The Masai*, Oxford 1905, p. 295.

[6] " Each boy... at his own village separately " states FOX, *Notes on Marriage Customs among the Masai*, p. 190; and FOSBROOKE, l. c., p. 38, writes " ... in the father's home (village) ". The coming together of few candidates for initiation makes the performance easier and economic. Thus, for a purely economic reason the children of poor parents frequently wait longer than others for initiation.

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monies are not performed by some selected individuals on behalf of others, as for *Embolosat* and *Enduugore-Engibata*. Also from a territorial point of view all these ceremonies differ. A single performance of *Embolosat*, which opens the class-period, is valid for all Masailand; *Enduugore-Engibata*, which opens the unit-period, is sectional; individual initiation is held at each village. The following diagram illustrates the correspondence.

A candidate's age for individual initiation is indicated by Fosbrooke as 16-17 years. The principle for admission to initiation seems to be that the candidate must have passed his puberty, and his father must have performed "the passing of the fence" as described above. [**]

Circumcision is the central point of Masai individual initiation. The ceremony is performed in three stages, *a*) a testing of the past moral behaviour of the candidate; *b*) the ordeal of circumcision; *c*) a period of special segregation.

a) On the eve of circumcision day the candidate is completely shaved by his mother. The elders are entertained with meat and beer [**] at the house of the candidate's mother. [**] Then the elders

[**] Cases may occur of boys who have to be initiated at an earlier age for some special reason. Fosbrooke, *l. c.*, p. 28 records the instance of a father's orphan having to be initiated in his early puberty in order to inherit.

[**] Hollis, *l. c.*, p. 297, states that a bullock is slaughtered and called *el-oirupukisiak* — the (animal) that has caused him to be taken out of the boys' ranks. Fox says that a number (5, 6 or 9) of gourds of beer are offered to the elders.

[**] There is no special meaning in the use of the mother's house. The custom is occasioned by the arrangement of a Masai polygynic village. Every

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881 "ask the boy (candidate) various questions as to his past behaviour, and he is put on oath to answer truly".[592] Apparently no special ordeal such as we find among the Kipsigis is attached to this testing.

b) The operation may be performed "in the morning or the evening according to the particular custom of the family concerned" (Fox). Generally it takes place early in the morning. The operator [648] is said never to be a Masai. Generally he is a Dorobo, and sometimes a Kikuyu (Fox). This peculiarity is worth noting, especially if it is compared with the great care observed in selecting all other leaders or officers out of the pure Masai."

881 304 Before the operation is performed, the candidates take a cold bath in order to make their body insensible, or remain "shivering in a state of nudity until the sun rises" (Bagge).[593] Candidates are then operated upon, outside the village near the right-hand post of the gate. The patient must not betray any sign of suffering. That would disgrace him and all his family. A few elders assist and support the patient during the operation, and help him to his mother's house after the wound has been washed. Once inside he is given food (fresh blood) and a special beverage, called *eng alipeta*, after which he is allowed to speak.

881 [491] The circumcised youth is presented by his mother's brother with new sandals, and henceforth he is not supposed to make use of any garment worn before the ceremony. A procession by four girls (cfr. Fox), waving branches takes place to the entrance of the [594] boy's hut. The elders are again entertained with meat and beer;

[595] wife of a man has her independent house where she lives with her children and cattle. But the whole homestead belongs to the father, and it would be quite correct, though not as precise, to say: the house of the candidate's father.

[834] [592] We may assume that these questions are connected with the candidate's moral and sexual behaviour. Fosbrooke states that "prior to circumcision no youth may have intercourse with a circumcised woman. This is a rule most strictly adhered to". The same custom is observed among the Nandi-speaking peoples.

[593] Cfr. the election of the *Oi Oi opoloe* at the *Eunkolosat*; of the *oi amai* boys, the *oipurenani*, and the *meferepma* at the *Endungoro-Engibala*; of the *oi enenei* at the wash.

[231] [594] Leakey states that it is "absolutely essential that the cattle shall be in their enclosure during the whole of the ceremony". No further details are given nor are reasons offered for this fact which is not mentioned by any of our Masai authorities. However, it shows that circumcision is not related to the cattle aspect of Masai culture.

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the warriors with milk. This seems to be the feast that MERKER refers to as "the feast of the circumcised boys – *ol ogor lel aijok amerate*". The newly circumcised remain in his mother's house until the wound is healed.

c) At this stage all the newly circumcised assemble from the various villages; they form small bands and go around shooting at small birds with special small bows and arrows. They wear women's clothes, women's ear-decorations (used also by elders) and a special headdress to which they append the birds they kill. During this period they are called *es sibolio*, pl. *i-sibolio* – the recluse, and are under strict regulations: At evening they must return home and enter the village before the cattle. They must not drink blood or cut meat or touch it with their hands. They must not wash. They must avoid girls. They must not fight with, or be struck by, any other: if this happens, milk must be put on their heads. They must not go out in the daytime without their special headdress.

The period of segregation may last for some months. At the end by order of the elders they are shaved by their mothers (hence they are called the shaved ones – *ol barnoti* pl. *el barnot*) and presented by their fathers with the arms of the warriors, a spear, a sword and a shield. It is a peculiar distinction of the initiates to let their hair grow and to twist it into a pigtail of which they are very proud. [73] At this later stage the initiates will be called *ol morani*, pl. *el moran*, i. e. those who have been circumcised.

It is generally stated, and apparently even by the Masai themselves, that as soon as a youth is circumcised he becomes a man. The evidence shows clearly that the expression "becomes a man" does not describe the real social status of a newly circumcised. Even if the statement is taken to mean that through circumcision a boy has attained the status of a man, and therefore is entitled to full participation in Masai social life, the statement is at variance with the evidence. As a matter of fact no Masai is allowed to marry soon after circumcision. In order to marry he must be at least a senior initiate, i. e. a member of the senior age-unit. [74] A newly circumcised (i. e. a junior, and to some extent also a senior initiate) may

[73] On this particular custom, *cfr.* MERKER, l. c., p. 143; ELLIOT, in *T. N. and R.*, 1948, n. 26, pp. 80 ss.

[74] The seniority of the age units is discussed in the next paragraph. With reference to the text above we note that even when a senior initiate marries, he is not allowed to beget children, as this is the privilege of the elders. See below, where LEAKEY and FOX are cited.

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561 [182] c) That the killing of the bull is a religious sacrifice is shown by the fact that the bull is killed in a ceremonial way, i. e. by suffocation.[169] Prayers are also offered to God, and ceremonial hide-rings from the bull's skin are distributed to all those present.

d) At first sight the ceremonial fire gives the impression of being inconsistent with this ritual pattern. It serves to destroy the bones of the sacrificed bull, and it is also produced at the foundation of the village of the initiates (*manyatta*). The importance of this ritual element, however, becomes evident if we compare it with the so called *piron* relationship. *Il-piron* is the firestick used for producing new fire. The breaking of a similar stick by the *piron*-elders is the main rite of *Endungore*, and the elders and candidates when they visit the prophet say: "This is our fire-stick, we are one".[170]

881 561 Against the background of the above patterns, individual initiation, in the way it is now performed, i. e. by circumcision, seems to stand apart and follow a pattern of its own. This discord is somewhat striking, and one may be permitted to hasard the opinion that circumcision as such is foreign to the age-system of the Masai. Indeed, the structure of the age-system as such has no direct connection with individual initiation.

561 *The Overlapping Rhythm.* Discussing the interval between the various ceremonies which institute the age-units we accepted the period of seven years as a good thongh vague, approximation. On that basis we may now assume that fifteen years is a parallel approximation of the interval between the institution of two age-classes.

The innacuracy of any numerical computation with regard to Masai age-system is emphasized by what we call the overlapping rhythm.

Up to this point the age-class has been considered absolutely, i. e. without relation to preceding or succeeding classes. In facts the actual institution of a class is related to other classes, and especially to that class immediately preceding and the one which follows immediately. Similarly one age-unit is related to the unit next above it and the one next below it. Let us consider the phenomenon by focussing attention on the left-hand unit. This is the second of the two units of a class, and the junior of the two. As

[231] [169] The ordinary way of killing a beast is by stabbing it in the nape of the neck. Cf. HOLLIS, *l. c.*, pp. 157, 300.

[170] WHITEHOUSE, *l. c.*, pp. 146 ss.

6:Thomson K-3 (1883-1884)1887
FL12 Masai FL12

ing to his father to learn something about his origin, and this I believe is—among other stories—what he was told. The primal ancestor of the Masai was one Kidenoi, who lived at Donyo Egèrè (Mount Kenia), was hairy, and had a tail. Filled with the spirit of exploration, he left his home and wandered south. The people of the country, seeing him shaking something in a calabash, were so struck with admiration at the wonderful performance that they brought him women as a present. By these he had children, who, strangely enough, were not hairy, and had no tails, and these were the progenitors of the Masai. As Moran had not heard anything of the theories which were convulsing scientific Europe and America, he remained ignorant of the fact that he had struck upon an interesting legend which the *savants* of civilized society would have given their beards to verify.

Meanwhile Moran practised with the spear, and killed innumerable imaginary enemies. He listened intently with beating heart to the stories of daring cattle-raids and sanguinary fights, but as yet he could only dye his spear in the blood of an antelope, or, it might be, of a buffalo. His food still continued to be that of a non-fighter, namely, curdled milk, maize, or millet, and meat. But vegetable paste was the meat of women and children, and he loathed it, though he ate it.

As he approached the age of fourteen he began to develop a truculent and ferocious expression, instead of making himself sick in the attempt to smoke a cigar, or examining his upper lip in the glass, as a lad of proper spirit in England would have done at the same age. It is quite laughable to think of Moran trying to look dangerous, pursing his brow, and generally cultivating the fiendish. And really, I am told he was the admiration and the envy of all the Lèon (boys) of the district, and quite won the hearts of the girls.

At last it was agreed that Moran had become a man, and was fit to be a warrior. A certain rite, better known in Africa than in Europe, was performed; and Moran was no longer a boy, he was an El-moran—a warrior. His father, who was wealthy, resolved to rig him out in the height of military fashion. For this purpose they journeyed to a neighbouring settlement of Andorobbo—a clan who are despised heartily by their distant relatives, the aristocratic Masai, on account of their ignoble mode of gaining a livelihood by the chase. After making the Andorobbo quake in their

6: Thomson K-3 (1883-1884)1887
FL12 Masai FL12

sandals, they chose a handsome shield of buffalo hide, beautifully made, elliptical in shape, and warranted to stand a tremendous blow from a spear. The price being asked, a bullock was mentioned as the very lowest cost price. But the unfortunate maker had to be content with a scraggy sheep—and a blow. This purchase accomplished—for the Masai never *make* shields or spears, though there is nothing in the possession of which they pride themselves so much—they returned to the kraal, and then called for an El-konono. This is an inferior race kept in servitude to the Masai, for whom they make spears and swords. They do not go to war, and are not allowed to intermarry with their superiors. They all speak Masai, though it is believed they have a language of their own. In response to the call a miserable, half-starved object appeared with a selection of most murderous-looking weapons. After a careful examination Moran selected a spear, with a blade two feet and a half long, a wooden handle fifteen inches, and a spike at the end about one foot and a half. The blade had an almost uniform width of from two to three inches, up to near the top, where it abruptly formed a point. A sword and a knobkerry of formidable appearance completed his warlike equipment.

These important acquisitions made, our hero now proceeded to dress himself up as became his new character. He first worked his hair into a mop of strings, those falling over the forehead being cut shorter than the rest. Instead of the ivory ear-stretcher hitherto used, he put in a swell ear ornament formed of a tassel of iron chain. Round his neck he put a bracelet of coiled wire, and round his wrists a neatly formed bead mitten. On his ankles he bound a strip of the black hair of the *colobus* (monkey) of Central Africa. A glorious layer of grease and clay was plastered on his head and shoulders. This completed, he donned a very neat and handsomely decorated kid-akin garment, of very scanty dimensions, which served to cover his breast and shoulders, but hardly reached below the waist, and thus stood forth the complete military masher, ready for love or war.

And now the great step of his life was taken. Thus far he had lived in the kraal of the married people, and accordingly had to comport himself as "only a boy." Now he proceeded to a distant kraal in which were none but young, unmarried men and women. To keep up his dignity and supply him with food his father provided him with a number

[text continues on p. 250]

8:Whitehouse U-3 (no date) 1933 FL12 Masai FL12
I'Sigirari

MASAI SOCIAL CUSTOMS.

By L. E. Whitehouse.

101 These notes have been prepared from information collected from the Masai who occupy the south-east corner of the Southern Reserve, between Kilimanjaro and the Chylulu Hills. They belong to a large [614] section of the tribe called I'Sigirari. This section unlike other Masai sections is divided into two sub-sections, the Ingidongi, to which all "medicine" men belong and the Il-Kisongo, the majority of whom live in Tanganyika Territory.

The Kisongo living in Kenya distinguish themselves from those of Tanganyika by assuming yet a third name "Il Oitokitok." This name is undoubtedly derived from that of a spring "Engoitokitok," meaning "bubbling water." It was in the vicinity of this spring that the Masai settled when first they inhabited that part of the country.

561 I propose to deal with certain customs and ceremonies connected with the founding of a new age group. For the benefit of those who may not be conversant with this form of tribal government, may I briefly explain that the Masai tribe is divided into age groups called *il poror* or *ol-ajl*. All youths circumcised during a specified period of years are said to belong to the same warrior age and together they form one age-group. In some sections an age-group is formed of two distinct divisions, a senior and a junior, known as the right-hand circumcision and the left-hand circumcision. Later a group passes from the status of warriors to that of elders and thus make way for a new age-group to rise to warrior rank.

● [881] Masai boys are circumcised usually between the ages of seventeen and twenty-five. The ceremonies which recommence about every seven years extend over a period of about five years. When the majority of the youths are circumcised and a warrior age-group of considerable number is assured, a movement is made to prevent any more boys from joining that group. Those responsible for the movement are the elders of the age-group next senior to the warriors at the time. These elders are to become sponsors and instructors to the members of a new age-group for the formation of which they make preparations.

They first send for a few of the bigger uncircumcised boys and explain that it is proposed to form a new age. In order to do this a ceremony called *endungori* must be held. The boys receive their [292] instructions and immediately don short cloaks made from black calf skins and anoint their heads with red earth that they may resemble warriors. They then set off in procession round the country on what

9:Fosbrooke G-5 (1936-1948) 1948 FL12 Masai FL12
Kisonko

B. Junior Warriorhood. — circumcision — subdivisions of age — formation of Manyattas — relations between junior and senior warriors — promotion (Unoto).

881 304 561 As in the case of other ceremonies, it is not the details but the wider significance of the operation which claims our attention. The first most important point is that circumcision is the visible sign of admittance to full membership of the tribe, and that anyone desirous of becoming a "Masai" must be operated upon. After admittance there are many ceremonies of promotion but it is not essential that every member of the tribe should attend; it is essential, however, that he should be circumcised. Prior to circumcision no youth may have intercourse with a circumcised woman. This is a rule most strictly adhered to. Further, the moran, whose perquisite the mature girls are, deny the youths' access to their girls. Consequently circumcision and its attendant ceremonies admit the youths to a full sex life.

881 304 428 561 Hollis states that circumcision usually takes place between the ages of 13 and 17, though orphans and the children of poor parents frequently wait until they are twenty. My own observations would indicate that 16 or 17 is the lower limit, except in the case of youths whose fathers have died, who want to be in a position to inherit. The existence of this latter custom, circumcision to permit inheritance, is a good example of the meaning of the ceremony. If it has not been performed, the youth whose father dies cannot inherit; the cattle, wives, etc., must all be taken over by a paternal uncle as guardian pending the circumcision of the eldest male child. But if permission can be obtained for his circumcision a youth of ten or twelve can assume control of a boma, to the exclusion of all other relatives. In other words, as stated above, circumcision is the mark of full membership of the tribe.

561 When the initiation of a new age has been sanctioned circumcision takes place singly or in groups of two or three in the father's boma. The ceremony is usually performed during or at the end of the rains, a time of plenty amongst the Masai, and is suspended during the dry season. Four successive years are taken up with the circumcision of an age, and it is natural that those circumcised in one season possess a marked feeling of affinity towards one another. This shows itself in the possession of a group name for each batch, the same names being employed from generation to generation. They are, for the first batch, *il Changen opirr* or *il Kiperen*, followed by *il Paringotwalang*, *il Kirimbot* and finally *il Tareto*. The above refers to a right hand age; a left hand age, being fewer in number, possesses only the three last-mentioned divisions.

561 621 When all of one age have been circumcised they divide themselves into companies (*isirit*) each of which forms a warrior village or barracks (*emanyatta*). In Tanganyika the manyattas are usually formed on a territorial or sectional basis, e.g. Engasumet, Olmolog, Mferegi (areas) or Selei, Purku, etc. (sections), though Whitehouse describes a ceremony whereby the warriors, presumably of one area, divide themselves up, frequently on a clan basis.

9:Fosbrooke G-5 (1936-1948) 1948 FL12 Masai FL12
Kisonko

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SENIOR MORAN — blowing Kudu horn.

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NEWLY CIRCUMCISED YOUTH.

[Facing p. 30]

836 983 684 [834] and also provided they avoid such young girls as are attached to men in the warrior classes. That these young uninitiated lads even try to have intercourse with married women is certain, as there is a special penalty provided for women who so debase themselves. (*See* Marriage.)

881 561 *Preparation for Initiation.*—No boy is allowed to think about preparing for initiation until he can show a growth of facial hair indicating puberty. Boys are always very anxious to be initiated as soon as possible, and as soon as they consider that they can make a reasonable claim that they are old enough, they form themselves into groups of anything from six to a dozen, dress themselves in new calf-skins, and, taking with them bows and arrows, go out on a tour of all the villages of the district announcing that they are candidates for initiation and demanding presents. These groups are called *olamal*, and by long custom they must be given anything they ask for which is within reason.

[431] Custom dictates that they shall ask especially for honey and hyrax-skin karosses, and these they take and present to senior and influential elders belonging to various circumcision groups, at the same time requesting them to bring up the question of their initiation at the councils, and to make all the necessary arrangements. There is often a delay of anything from six months to a year before the consent of the councils is obtained and arrangements are set on foot. In the meantime the groups of boys continue on their visiting tours collecting more presents as further persuasion to the elders to do as requested, and fresh groups of boys are formed and add themselves to the number of the candidates for initiation.

[836] During the whole time that these *olamal* groups are wandering about from village to village they may sleep with any of the uninitiated girls in the villages which they visit (even those who are attached to young warriors), provided that they observe the normal restrictions of the warrior classes.

Ceremony of Seizing the Ox by the Horns.—When at length the elders have consented to proceed with the initiation ceremonies, those elders to whom the presents of honey and hyrax-skins were given make the necessary arrangements for the ceremony of seizing the horns of the black ox. These elders select a village of some elder of the [614] Lukumai sub-clan (the ox must always be supplied by a member of this sub-clan), and demand a black ox without any defect and without any trace of other colour on any part of its body. Should the owner of the selected village not possess such an ox he must obtain one from another member of the Lukumai sub-clan, and if he cannot do so he must obtain it from another clan by purchase or exchange, and present it to the elders. This ox is called *oregeteng*.

When the ox has been procured, a special village is built near where the ox was obtained, and a day is fixed for the horn-seizing ceremony. Only those of the candidates for initiation whose fathers took part in a horn-seizing ceremony are allowed to take part; the rest of the candidates cannot do so, but stay at their homes while the ceremony takes place.

11: Leakey E-5 (no date) 1930 FL12 Masai FL12
Kenya

Those candidates who are eligible to take part in the ceremony assemble on the day fixed for the proceedings. They come from all parts of the Masai country, north, south, east, and west, as there is only one ox-seizing ceremony in the whole of Masai country before a new age-group proceeds to initiation and circumcision. They wear ordinary everyday dress and carry sticks. The ox is brought into the village by the elders in charge of the ceremony, and the boys are lined up some distance away. A signal is given, and immediately the boys race to the ox, each boy endeavouring to get a firm grip of the ox's horns or of the hump. As soon as two boys have succeeded in gripping these parts firmly, all those boys of the same clan protect him with their sticks, while all the others endeavour to force the boys to release their grip. Should they do so and should boys of another clan succeed in taking their place, they in their turn are attacked by the other clans and defended by their own. After a time the elders stop the contest, and those who succeeded in keeping their grip are greatly lauded. The two boys who actually held the horns and hump respectively will be renowned for their success for the rest of their lives. It is a recognised thing that during the contest very many individuals receive more or less serious wounds.

As soon as the contest has been stopped, the ox is slaughtered and eaten by all present at the ceremony, and the hide is cut up into small strips, in each of which a hole is cut, and a strip put as a ring on the middle finger of the right hand of each of the boys who participated in the contest. If any skin remains over after each boy has been thus decorated, it is cut into a long thin thong, which is given to a boy candidate of the Lukumai sub-clan (*i.e.* the sub-clan who provided the ox). This boy is called *olobolosoi elegeteny*. This thong must never be lost or parted with, but the small strips of skin placed on the boys' fingers must be removed a day or two later and thrown down in that part of the boy's mother's house where the calves sleep.

When this ceremony is over the boys go to their own homes to await their turn for circumcision.

Circumcision.—The candidates are not circumcised in groups at local centres, but individually at their own homes, and as the number of operators is limited, candidates may have to wait for anything up to two years before their turn comes. The operators travel from district to district, visiting all the villages where there are candidates, and circumcising them at their own homes. During the interval between the end of the ox-seizing ceremony (before which none of the candidates may be circumcised) and the time when his turn to be circumcised arrives, each boy goes back to his cattle-herding and carries on with the normal routine life of an uninitiated boy.

The operators who circumcise the boys are never true Masai, but invariably "Wandorobo" living in Masai country, but no explanation of this could be obtained except that it had always been so from the beginning.

11: Leakey E-5 (no date) 1930 FL12 Masai FL12
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881 As only those candidates who belong to a given village may be operated on in that village, it is seldom that there is more than one circumcised at a time, but should there be two or three candidates belonging to a single village they would be circumcised together on the same day at the same time. There is no elaborate ceremonial accompanying the operation or preparatory to it. A boy will continue herding his cattle until the late afternoon of the day before that fixed for his circumcision. He is then fetched back to the village and has his hair shaved off by his mother, and has new sandals and a new skin dress given to him. This dress must be made of the skins of four rams sewn together, and will be worn the following day during the operation. The actual operation takes place next day, either early in the morning or in the middle of the day. If it is [illegible]he morning, the cattle are kept in the yard until the ceremony is over, but [illegible]n the middle of the day the cattle must be brought into the yard and [illegible] during the ceremony, for it is absolutely essential that the cattle [illegible] their enclosure during the whole of the ceremony. Sheep and goats are not included in this rule. The boy (or boys) sits on an ox-skin in the courtyard in front of his mother's hut wearing his new ram-skin dress and sandals, and the operator performs the operation with a special small knife without any elaborate ceremonial. The boy then retires to his hut to convalesce. A fat ram is killed for the patient, who is fed on meat boiled in fat and on plain cold fat, "so that he may get well quickly." After about five or six days the other boys in the district who have already been circumcised and have recovered, call for the boy, and he joins their band for the period of their novitiate.

881 561 *The Novitiate.*—The period of novicehood varies in length of time, as a boy must remain in the novice stage from the time that he is circumcised until every other candidate has been circumcised too. Usually a period of about two years elapses between the time of the bull-seizing ceremony and the time when the last candidate has been operated upon. Then the group undergoes the hair-shaving ceremony which marks their transfer from the novice stage to the warrior stage; thus, the last few to be circumcised may only have a few weeks in the novice stage, while others may be about two years in that stage. During the novitiate, there are certain rules and regulations which must be observed by the novices. They wander about the country in bands armed with bows and bird-arrows visiting more especially those villages where they hear that fresh candidates have just been circumcised, and enlisting them in their groups. During the whole novitiate period the novices must not cut their hair at all, nor may they indulge in any form of sexual intercourse, nor may they use red ochre, but only plain fat on their bodies. They are required to shoot as many birds as they can, and to skin them and stuff them roughly with grass, and tie them to their hair as a decoration. More and more skins are added to this head-dress as the weeks go by, until at length a boy has a complete wig of stuffed bird skins. Certain birds must on no account be so used, notably birds such as pigeons, doves, and

11: Leakey E-5 (no date) 1930 FL12 Masai FL12
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francolin. These bird skins, once fixed to the hair of the head, may not be removed until the general hair-shaving ceremony, when the hair of each novice is shaved off with the skins attached. During the period of the novitiate the boys are known as *loibartos* and are free to go anywhere "like women," and, in fact, may even visit the *manyattas* or warrior villages of the existing warrior groups with impunity.

There are special dances, called *osingoiles*, which are danced by the novices alone.

The Shaving Ceremony.—When at length all the candidates have reached the novice stage, the shaving ceremony, which marks the end of the novitiate, takes place. For this ceremony the novices are assembled in territorial groups, and each boy has his hair publicly shaved off by his mother (or in the event of his mother being dead, by another of his father's wives). This shaving ceremony is accompanied by the killing of a ram for each novice, after which his father presents him with a spear, shield, sword and knobkerrie, which are the insignia of his new status as a warrior.

The new warriors now form themselves into groups, and organise the building of villages, which will be their headquarters. These villages are the *manyattas* of the warrior groups (*see* below).

PART III.—WARRIORHOOD.

The Age-Group System.—The general word denoting an age-group is *uriokuri*, and this word is liable to cause considerable confusion unless very great care is taken, as it denotes in a general way several widely different forms of age-groups. All those warriors who pass from the novice stage to the warrior stage at the same time—in fact, all those boys circumcised between a single ox-seizing ceremony and the succeeding hair-shaving ceremony—are grouped as members of a single age-group which is given a name which lasts for life. Besides this permanent name, however, the age-groups during the warrior stage are known by the alternating names of *junjeriobor* and *murutyodienge*.

There may never be more than three age-groups in the warrior class at the same time; and also, a group with the name of *junjeriobor* must always be the senior warrior group. This, in effect, means that a single age-group cannot be transferred from the warrior class to the elders' class, but that two groups, a *junjeriobor* and a *murutyodienge*, must move out together, leaving the next *junjeriobor* as senior age-group in the warrior class, and temporarily the only age-group in the class. As soon as the two senior groups have moved out together, the next group, already in the novice stage, transfers into the warrior class with the name of *murutyodienge*, and in due course yet a third group will be initiated and enter the age-group as *junjeriobor*, after which no further transfer of a novice group can take

11: Leakey E-5 (no date) 1930 FL12 Masai FL12
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Summary of Warriorhood.

From boyhood upwards to the Elders' stage there are the following recognized steps, each with appropriate "rites de passage," except in the last stage. 561

(1) *Candidate Stage.*—After the boys have attained puberty, as shown by the first signs of hair growth on the face, they form bands who wander about the country receiving presents, and finally there is the horn-seizing ceremony, after which the candidates are circumcised and enter the novice stage. [881]

(2) *Novice Stage.*—No sex life is permitted to novices, who during their novitiate wander about with bows and arrows shooting birds for head-dresses. This stage is concluded by a head-shaving ceremony, after which the novices enter full warriorhood.

(3) *Junior Warrior Stage.*—This is a period of roughly nine years from the end of the novitiate. During this time—with certain exceptions—no warrior may shave the hair off his head. *Life is in the manyattas.* This period is concluded by the *Eunoto* ceremony and a general head-shaving which marks the entry into the senior warrior stage.

(4) *Senior Warrior Stage.*—Warriors remain in this class until there are two age-groups in it, and then transfer to the Elders' group. Transfer from the senior warrior stage to the Elders' stage cannot take place unless there are two age-groups ready to move up together.

PART IV.—GIRLHOOD.

Work.—As soon as girls are old enough to do so, at the age of about seven, they start helping their mothers and sisters in the general work of the village, sweeping out the huts, milking the cows, nursing the children, drawing water and sewing skins. There is, however, one sort of work which is never done by any uninitiated girl, and that is getting firewood. This work is specially reserved for married women. The girls' work may either be in the home village or else in a warrior's manyatta, should they have brothers living in a manyatta. 857 [313 581]

Sex Life.—From a very early age indeed the young girls imbibe the general atmosphere of Masai sex life. As already mentioned, those of them who have brothers living in the manyattas sleep from a very early age—long before puberty—on the same beds as couples indulging in sexual intercourse; and even those girls who live in the home villages learn all about such matters at a very early age owing to the fact that they always sleep on their mother's bed. As soon as ever the first signs of puberty are noticeable, girls may be asked by the warriors to sleep with them, and the question of whether there is complete intercourse or not rests then entirely with the girls. Moreover, the uninitiated boys, and especially those who tour the villages as candidates for initiation, expect all young girls who are not already 864 883 826

12: Fox G-5 (1925-1930) 1930 FL12 Masai FL12
Kenya

684 *Boyhood. Sex Life.*—In past times uncircumcised boys were severely punished by the warriors if they had sexual intercourse with a girl of any sort. This is no [178] longer the case, probably because the warriors are afraid of Government interference [648] should they ill-treat the boys.

Should an uncircumcised boy have intercourse with a married woman he may, when his time comes to be circumcised, fail to find an elder who will sit behind him [304] according to custom and hold him during the operation, but may have to sit unsupported. In an instance which I observed a boy who had so offended was circumcised in due form on payment of a fine of four cows.

881 561 The elders who decide when a new circumcision is to take place are those of the *Ol-Piron* generation to that which is about to be circumcised.

Ol-Piron means a firestick, and its significance is explained below under organization of generations and ages.

Ceremony of Seizing the Ox by the Horns.—The Masai call this ceremony *Kuhokowt o ol-Oiteng*, which means the tearing of the ox. *Ol-Oiteng* is the general word for an ox and is not confined to the one used at the ceremony. It must be performed first by the Il Kakonyuki section. I have not seen it performed.

881 *Circumcision.*—I will endeavour to describe a circumcision as I saw it. On my arrival a few minutes before sunrise the two boys who were candidates were standing naked and shivering outside one of the village gates. They had previously been completely shaved. An old man poured a little water over each from a pannikin. Ox hides were brought out and each boy sat on one. Each boy was held by an elder sitting behind him. They were just outside the village with their backs to the thorn fence which encircles the village. The operator appeared and circum- [304] cised each in turn. He was a Kikuyu and performed the operation with a dirty- [413] looking razor of a type made in Birmingham or Germany.

As soon as the operation was finished new sandals were put on the boy's feet by the elders; and the elder who was sitting behind him stood up, still holding him, and walked him off backwards through the village gate.

As soon as both boys had been circumcised the operator rushed off to repeat the performance at a village near by before the sun was high. I went back into the village with the elders. One of them drew blood from the neck of an ox for one of the candidates. We went into the hut of the mother of one of the candidates, where [393] the boy sat silent on a bed while we elders refreshed ourselves with honey wine. The boy is not allowed to speak for a period after the ceremony, but I have forgotten the length of the period.

A branch of a tree is tied to the front of the boy's mother's hut by leather thongs passed through the wall.

561 1978 *The Novitiate.*—Nowadays the novices do not need to remain in this stage till all the other candidates have been circumcised, but shave after a few months. They

13:Huntingford E-4 (no date) 1953 FL12 Masai FL12

553 and three old men. If it has not previously received a name, it may have been
852 called by the name of its father's father; but at the naming ceremony it receives a
name which may be that of its father or a name not connected with any relative.
551 People are also given nicknames referring to their physical or other peculiarities.
There is much uncertainty about Masai names; but every man has a patronymic,
consisting of *O-le*, "son of," preceding his father's name; this he appears to assume
after circumcision. Girls after circumcision may be referred to as *E-se*, "daughter
of," preceding their fathers' name. At marriage, the husband gives his wife a new
name. The practice of teknonymy is a regular feature. Before the circumcision of
his eldest son, a man becomes known as "the father of" *Se-ned-ua*, i.e., if his son is
called Sendeu, he becomes Menye Sendeu; his wife similarly becomes Ojoto Sendeu,
the mother of Sendeu.

551 The name of a dead child, woman, or warrior is not spoken again, and if the
48 name is an ordinary word, that word is no longer used by the family. Thus, if a
man called *Ol-emaisa*, "the gentle one," died, on his death the word *maisa* would
be replaced in his family by some such word as *poipoi*, "smooth."

Circumcision (E-murata)

● 881 Boys' circumcision ceremonies take place at intervals of about three years, and
304 the circumcision period is "open" for about four years. Though the operation may
be performed on boys singly or in small groups, the whole number of those circum-
[711] cised at the same time throughout Masailand forms an associating group correspond-
ing in some degree to the Nandi *mat* (see pp. 31 and 48). Judging by the published
accounts, circumcision was a much less prolonged and ceremonious affair than among
the Nandi. Before a boy can be circumcised, the father must submit to what is called
en-polosata e-nia, "the passing of the knife." After making honey-wine, he stays
alone in a small hut outside his kraal, dressed as a warrior. After four days, some
elders bring him back to his kraal, where he is told to remove the warrior's clothes
and become an old man. His son may then be circumcised.

Circumcision begins with the shaving and bathing of the initiate; in the
afternoon after this has been done an ox or sheep is killed and eaten by the warriors
and elders of the neighbourhood. On the second day, the boy cuts a tree called at
[124] this time *e-dalem*," which the girls of the kraal carry to the door of the hut [in which
the boy sleeps?], where it is planted. On the third morning the boy gets up early
and sits outside to get cold; after sunrise he is circumcised, the operator being often
a Dorobo. From the fourth to the seventh day he remains at home, and then goes
out, shooting with blunted arrows at the girls, and with other arrows at small birds
[934 which he wears hung from his head. This is his occupation till he has recovered:
293 during this time he is known as *e-ngwilani* and wears the dress of a married woman,
including the *i-suratia* ear-rings, and an ostrich-feather on his head. After recovery
he is shaved, given weapons and warrior's clothes, and becomes *el-barnoti*, "the
shaved one," i.e., a junior warrior. Till his kraal company forms its *manyata*, he
lives at home.

Girls undergo the operation of clitoridectomy in preparation for marriage. There
are no special times for this. An ox or sheep is killed before the operation. During
the period of recovery they are known as *e-ngwilani*, and wear on their heads a wreath
of the Hyphaene palm, *el-murtaian*, or *el-gnon*, instead of an ostrich feather.

Age-sets

544 Unlike the cyclic age-sets of the Nandi division, those of the Masai are of linear
type, that is, they do not work in recurring cycles and do not come into existence
till they are required. Nevertheless, it is clear from the lists of Krapf (1854), Hollis
(1905), and Fosbrooke (1948), as well as from the Tarrita age-sets (Hollis, 1901),
that some at least of the names are fixed and occur. In 1936 the names Il-Kimolo

* *Euphorbia candelabrum*; normally *esilo-it*, *el-sibilit*.

/82 cont./

551 Third names for girls: Big or = the sweeper, from x-ne, to sweep: Lenti, Ol gisje, Neiddi, after like-named town: Leeches, from xeches or xkes = to rain through into the house: Ei gubei = the way: Betsie = the one who fell down (x-betsy = to fall: x-dabetsy = I have fallen): Idbei, after a similar sounding call with which one calls back the goats and sheep that have strayed from the herd in the pasture: Kaxu = the thick-haired one.

[103] Names that women received after their marriage are: Big aru' ai, that is, the wife who comes from the Aruse area, as the Ideasi call the Cape-Aruseba /Great Aruaba/ area or Idersberg /lit. Mtns/, where many Ideasi found refuge in the famine. Ei gisiboro, after a former great warrior named Ol gisiboro: similarly formed Ei gisiboa from Ol gisiboa.

VII.

000 Circumcision of the boys. -- Point in time. -- The circumcision years, festivities at the end of them. -- Day of circumcision. -- Operation. -- Feast. -- Behavior of the circumcised until the healing of the wound. -- Circumcision of the girls. -- Point in time. -- Operation. -- Behavior of the circumcised until the healing of the wound.

• 81 [815] According to the belief of the Ideasi, circumcision was introduced by a command of God. After circumcision boys and girls are regarded as adults. The former are supposed to be circumcised as soon as they are strong enough for participation in a war expedition, that is, at the age of 12 to 15. Sometimes it is somewhat earlier, if the boy is particularly well developed, sometimes later if the father, lacking any other labor force, cannot spare him in the tending of the small livestock. Circumcision takes place least for poor sons of poor people or for propertyless orphans. Namely, for the rear teams held by the circumcised youths each one in turn has to provide a head of cattle: he must therefore either own it himself or have a father who will give it to him. If he lacks both, the boy has time to acquire a small stock of cattle by tending herds for the well-to-do, and until then to remain uncircumcised. Such boys are called ai xaxbi ? gisiba. This word means "herdsmen," but signifies that it is a matter of someone who tends the livestock of other people for pay, like the Biblical word "hireling."

/[illegible]/

[illegible] The circumcision of boys is a public affair and is ordered by the [illegible]. With the issuing of his order, the circumcision years ([illegible]) begin, that is, the following five or five /[illegible]/ years during which the boys may be circumcised. In all the districts the old men now hold consultations and set a definite day (1)

1. The circumcision of the boys belonging to the lineage of the [illegible] always takes place on the 24th day of the lunar month.

for the circumcision of the first division of the boys in question. Similarly, later, in the following years, the circumcision days, usually only one in each year, will be determined for the following divisions of boys. It should be mentioned here, beforehand that all boys circumcised during a series of circumcision years have an age class [illegible] and that this age class is given a definite name by the [illegible]. The circumcision period is ended by the [illegible] ordering the [illegible]. This is a festival which is celebrated by the first boys to

Ill. 19. Ibibio boys.

/01 cont./

• 01| question for the next circumcision period. These choose for this, on the eve of the festival, a recently built family kraal, which is then designated as <u>sig of</u>] village] right. Decked out with a costume in imitation of the warriors, but without weapons and, instead, a long stick in the right hand, the boys amuse themselves with dance and song in the vicinity of the kraal. When they crowd into the kraal after the five dances, in order to moisten their parched throats with milk, they are /01/ sprinkled with honey beer by an old man standing at the entrance and congratulated with the words <u>ee fabelin, ee fawe ilfe, ee fabe lawlas</u>, that is, roughly: may you become ever more numerous, cattle as rich, and bring prosperity to the country. During the festival the boys choose a spokesman or speaker (<u>ol ngarewan</u>) from their midst, whose task is to train them in commendably and carge spirit. When the festival has lasted two days, the boys move into the various neighboring areas in order to repeat it there. In this way an <u>ol gebiko</u> often lasts a month. It is also to be mentioned that very many women appear at these festivals, and especially all who have up to then remained barren. The former appear in part as mothers of the celebrating boys, in part as companions of the barren ones, and the latter for their part come in order to have themselves pelted by the boys with -- fresh cattle dung, because through that they will become fruitful, according to a conviction prevailing generally among the Masai. In each of the following four to five circumcision years [] <u>ol</u> <u>enchangiki</u>] right) a similar festival is celebrated. It should be mentioned further that the cattle whose ears is used to feed the participants at the <u>ol gebiko</u> festival are not killed, as is customary, by a stab in the neck, but rather by suffocation.

Let us now consider the circumcision festival:

A few weeks beforehand one already sees the boys, adorned with as much ornamentation as possible, singing and dancing every day in their own and the neighboring kraals, through which they express their joy over soon being able to enter the privileged standing of the warriors. On the day before the operation the boy's head is shaved, and the hair is thrown under the bed of the children in the maternal [illegible]. The boy takes off his skin cape and ornaments and dresses himself

/82 cont./

881 in a long leather apron reaching to the feet (ol gelé, ol gelêt),
[892] which his mother has made for him for this purpose. On the following day all the boys to be circumcised appear before sunrise at a place in the vicinity of a kraal, chosen by the three or four operators needed each time. The warriors also assemble there at the same time in order to be present at the operation. Since the latter is very painful, the coolest part of the day is chosen. The boys pour cold water over each other, in order to become numb. The operation,
[752] [887] which is professionally performed by old men, especially Wandorobo, is the following /the following paragraph has been translated from the Latin of the original source/:

881 304 After the outer skin of the penis has been drawn back and the inner lamella of the foreskin nearest the back of the glans has been cut around with a knife, the glans lies in an elongated sheath, which is then cut on top so that the glans passes through. Half of the skin that thus hangs far down below the glans is removed, and the rest grows together within 14 days and, after healing, looks like an uvula (1).

1. The following should also be mentioned here /the rest of the footnote has been translated from the Latin/: In order to look cut (circumcised), boys sometimes smear the glans with the juice of an herb of the genus Euphorbia, called "ol lugi." The swelling glans prevents the foreskin from sliding forward.

[412] /83/ A finger-long, pointed, and double-edged knife serves as instrument. During the operation the boy sits with legs apart on the
[752] leather apron spread out on the ground. After it, the wounded part is washed with milk, which, caught in the apron together with the blood low, is carried by the circumcised boy, who strides backwards for this, into his mother's hut and is poured on the ground there. An
[866] agent to stanch the blood is not used. During the circumcision
[626] itself the parents of the boy remain in their hut, for if the latter moans or cries out from the pain, they are punished with abusive

/93 cont./

words and blows by the assembled warriors, because they did not rear their son to have the hardening and self-control necessary for a warrior, while the weakling is reviled for a long time afterwards as olkiyo = coward, or olokal = the bad one. After the circumcision all the men of the neighborhood gather in the kraal, where they are regaled with meat and honey beer by the fathers of the ones just circumcised, after the latter have kindled a fire with juniper twigs (Juniperus procera). The festival is called ol ogiki i ai olpiak ayeshe, that is, the festival of the circumcised boys. Unbelievable amounts (1)

1. I once observed that my four Masai boys together at an evening meal ate over 10 pounds of lean meat.

of raw or half-cooked meat slightly roasted at the open fire are consumed in the shortest time by the married men and women, whereas the warriors neither eat meat nor drink honey beer, but only take some fresh milk. People joke and laugh and everyone seems to want to outshout the others. The warriors boast of alleged heroic deeds in former wars and discuss the prospects of the ones circumcised that day on their first military expedition, which will perhaps take them to this or that region, where they themselves had made an attack only a short time before. The fathers dream of their sons' future heroic deeds and are happy at the thought of the rich booty with which the budding warriors will augment the paternal herds. Suddenly the glances of a few who had just been joking darken and turn toward a distant hut at whose door a military old man is sitting. They jump up and go toward him with quick steps. The angry expressions on their faces mutches their rough and abruptly uttered invectives and threats, in which one hears the reproaches that the old man has brought up his son to be a weak coward, who during the circumcision betrayed his pain by a twitching of facial muscles and a half-suppressed groan, which they, however, jestingly compare to the roar of pain of a bull being cut. The old man has quickly fled from their imprecations into his hut, and his attackers vent their wrath on two gourd bottles of honey beer left standing, which they knock over and

• 88 | /83 cont./
[624] [52] trample underfoot. The one now scorned had also wanted /84/ to regale guests with it on that day, but no one came to him whose son showed himself to be a shithaf. While the old people, as long as [535] there is something to eat and drink, are only interested in that, the [533] warriors, already early in the afternoon, start to dance and sing with the young girls and amuse themselves in this way into the night. Not until about ten o'clock do they go back to their kraal, to which the girls presently follow them, after they have begged for a little more milk, which they take along to their lovers. /Ill. 18 appears here./

[358] The circumcised boys, soon after the completed operation, went into the huts of their mothers and stayed there for seven days, until a superficial healing of the wound has taken place. In order to hasten this, they are particularly well cared for and are given only milk, blood, and meat. During the following period, until complete [411] [225] healing, they roam in small bands with bow and arrow -- they do not use the ordinary bows, but ones only about half as long, made only for this occasion; the arrows used with them have a wax ball at the tip -- through steppe /85/ and forest, in order to shoot small birds, the skins of which they string by the beaks on a cord, which they place garland-like around forehead and occiput. Between the bird [301] [302] skins the en sibelio (sing. on sibeli) -- as the newly circumcised ones are called during their recuperation -- stick an ostrich feather on each side of their heads and paint their faces with white clay (en dunnot). [242] On the five day they go out, they slaughter a white goat-buck on the steppe. After they have roasted and eaten its meat, they throw the gnawed bones into the fire. This meal is called ol gîlo l ol lenuk (ol gîlo = the goat buck, ol lenuk means the tree with whose branches they make the fire). Every evening after their excursions they return to the kraal and to the huts of their mothers.

[1] [91] As soon as the young girl, who until then has lived in the warrior kraal in the most unrestrained freedom, concludes from certain

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 86]

18t Meyer--65 G-5 (1865-ca.1900) 1910 FL12 Masai FL12

/Illustration from p. 64 of the original source./

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Ill. 18. Boys just circumcised - ex ollonio.

/65 cont./
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indications that she is about to become a woman, she returns to her

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III. 19. Young Masai girls.

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[591] mother's hut. If several girls of the kraal are in the same situation, the mothers agree /66/ on a definite day (1)

[613] 1. The circumcision of the girls belonging to the El kiboshi always takes place on the 24th day of the Masai month.

for which they then secure an old woman experienced in circumcision. Otherwise they wait a few more weeks: perhaps a girl who is ready will still be found, since one need not necessarily wait for the aforementioned indications. or, if by chance a circumcision of the boys is about to take

/66 cont./

•881 place, they wait until that day. Shared pain is half the pain, and a certain coyness is part of good breeding among the brown Masai maidens too. The circumcision of boys and girls on one day takes place at different spots, and, while no female creature may come near the boys' place, so too no man or boy may enter the hut where, in the presence of her mother, the daughter is circumcised. On the day before the latter's head has been shaved and her hair tossed under the skin of the bed. She has removed all her ornaments and has clothed herself with a long apron (ol gĕla, el gelani), which her mother has made. The latter is now trying /67/ to make the parts coming into question numb

[302] →

[301] [292] →

[252] →

[91] [10] [142] ←

Jos. Deeg phot.

Ill. 20. Half-grown Masai girl.

with cold water and, during this, encouraging her little daughter sitting on the ground with beating heart. The operation is a simple [344] [142] excision of the clitoris and is performed with a sharpened piece of sheet iron (ol morenja) such as is used to shave the head. Then the [72] small wound is washed with milk, which, together with the blood shed, seeps into the ground. A blood-stanching agent is not used here either. Until complete healing the girl remains, as es sibeli (pl. es sibelie), in [311] the hut of her mother. Instead of the bird skins and ostrich feathers [312] that the boys put on, she wears around her forehead a ring plaited out

/67 cont./

881 of grass (ol márisian), into the front of which she sticks an ostrich
[301] feather, and, just like them, paints her face with white clay. On
[302] the circumcision day the women of the kraal arrange a feast among themselves, for which the girl's father has given a head of cattle
[583] and her mother has brewed honey beer. As soon as the bridegroom of the es sieñgiki (pl. es sieñgikin) -- this is the title for a circumcised girl and for a young woman -- learns that she is well again, he brings her father the last remainder of the bride price, whereupon nothing more stands in the way of the wedding.

The above-mentioned years counted as circumcisionless years for the boys do not come into consideration for the circumcision of the girls, as, indeed, is in the nature of the matter; rather, they may be circumcised at any time.

VIII.

000 Age grades. -- Designation of the members of the different age grades of both sexes. -- The terms of address, affected by membership in an age grade, among male individuals, female individuals, and male and female individuals between each other.

561 As among almost all culture-poor peoples, so too among the Masai the social position is assigned to the single individual in general
[562] by the age grade to which he belongs. That this is shown most clearly in the life of the man is explained by the mere fact that he is the lord living for his own pleasures; far below him stands the woman, who has a right to live only because of her labor power for him and her ability to bear children.

Until circumcision the male individual is regarded as a boy (ol aíjoni, el aíjak); during the preparation for circumcision and until after the healing of the wound, he is called os siboli (pl. es sibolio). Thereafter, for a space of time of about two years, he is introduced to the warrior's life and during this period is called ol barnoti (pl. el barnot). When this apprenticeship, during which fully and youthful exuberance are supposed to spend themselves, is over, he is regarded as a full-fledged warrior, el morúaí (pl. el mórag). As such the Masai spends his "best years," until he leaves the warrior standing at the age of 28-30 in order to get married and, as el móruo (el morusk),

[Warrior Kraal]

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Every warrior has his favorite girl (na sandja) (1).

1. /This footnote has been translated from the Latin in the original source./ Girls not yet "circumcised" live with the fighting men, sleeping with this one today, that one tomorrow. Pregnancy for a girl not yet circumcised is considered an outrage and is avoided either by interrupting cohabitation during the menses and the six days following or by withdrawing the penis before ejaculation. A pregnant girl gets rid of the fetus by an abortion brought about by medicaments. In wartime parents do not have intercourse for one or two months. Rupturing the hymen is neither a public custom nor a solemn rite.

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[842]
[847]
[834]
[833]

As long as he is at home she lives with him, takes care of his livestock, and makes part of his ornaments. The girl calls her lover os sandja and shows the others the coming about of this relationship by bringing a gourd bottle full of milk to the warriors squatting together and placing it beside the left leg of her lover.

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Ill. 31. Warrior in war adornment.

/331 cont./

*539 *773 *171 *121 304

as the closest association of ideas: circumcision -- conception -- birth. Therefore circumcision is regarded here as a means, even though not necessary for conception, nevertheless desirable for it and promoting it. We find the same thought in the Bible, where God, in Gen. 17, 6, when he announces to the 99-year-old, childless Abraham the sign of the covenant, i.e., circumcision, says: "And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee."

According to the preceding, the circumcision of boys seems to owe its origin to the view that it increases the procreative ability of the man. Quod judicium positum est in experientia, virum membro circumciso coire longius, feminam magis irritari. Viri membro non circumciso coëuntis seminis ejaculatio accelerstur, saepe nimis, priusquam feminae voluptas venerea culmen ascenderet. Membro circumciso seminis ejaculatio retardatur et cum voluptatis venereae culmine congruit, quod ad conceptionem efficiendam faustum est. /It is a judgment based on experience that a man with a circumcised organ has intercourse longer, and excites the woman more. The ejaculation of semen of a man having intercourse with an uncircumcised organ is speeded up, sometimes too much, before the sexual pleasure of the woman reaches a climax. When the organ has been circumcised, the ejaculation of semen is slowed down and coincides with the climax of sexual pleasure, which is favorable to bringing about conception./ This leads to the conjecture that the lawgiver who introduced the circumcision of boys was acting with the intention of promoting conception and along with that increasing the number of births, i.e., multiplying the people. Circumcision [187] became a preparation for marriage and, accordingly, is still carried out by the Masai, as among other primitive peoples, only after the onset of puberty. A later age made it a tribal symbol for the Israelites and Masai and, as such, moved it among the former to earliest childhood. Through the belief -- strong in Israel as well [186] as among the Masai -- in the divine favor before other peoples, the tribal symbol then became a visible sign of this, from which is derived the explanation of circumcision as a symbol of religious

••• for Tanganyika.

561 181 (b) Age grade: The age grade system is of great importance in the life of a Masai man, since it regulates his conduct toward other men and women and is the basis for the political organization of the tribe. The system is also of significant use in dating past events (Fosbrooke, 1954).

721 181 Warfare was of great importance to the Masai prior to the 1900's. The whole social organization of the tribe was built around the production and maintenance of an effective fighting force. Although actual fighting is relatively rare now, the customs and social organization remain basically the same.

857 233 • 381 561 701 Until his early teens the primary duties of a boy are herding livestock (Fig. 9). Roughly every seven years there are a series of ceremonies culminating in a circumcision ceremony. This ceremony is taken by all the young men of the correct age (roughly in their mid teens), and it produces a class of warriors each of whom is known as ol-murrani, or murran. This is considered the most important occasion in the life of a Masai man, and from then on he is a full member of the tribe. Each group to be circumcised is given an age

class name, and is allied with the next (or previous) group, the first being the right hand grade and the other being the left hand grade. After several years the junior warriors go through another ceremony and become full warriors. Their total period of warrior duty may be about 15 years. The warriors are distinguished by their hair style and spear.

The hair style involves a complicated plaiting of the hair with some combination of cords, pieces of hide or gut, bark, or sticks; all liberally plastered with sheep or cow fat and red ochre. Elliott (1948) has detailed the methods and materials used and variations in style between areas.

The warriors' spear is often over five feet long. It has a long, narrow, double-edged blade, an equally long but round and pointed tail, and between them a very short wooden hand grip serving as a shaft. Warriors also carry a flat, double-bladed long knife or short sword called a simi. These useful weapons are carried at the waist in a red leather sheath. Originally the metal weapons were produced by metal-working tribes. They now come from England and the first thing a moran does after buying a spear or simi is to file off the [illegible] mark. When in ceremonial dress or at war the